give us here, as they did when d'Annunzio came to see them, those grapes gathered on the island, dried in the sun, and then rolled in small packets and enclosed in vine leaves saturated with rum. This makes little packets the color of cigars whose dry and unattractive envelope preserves the grape's sugar and juice.

From La Cava a road rises into the mountains. The network of branches and vine-shoots above the road makes you imagine the wonderful spring seasons ornamented by these trellises suspended in the clear air on slight elm trees and frail poplars. The woods that we go through are already flowering with purple crocuses.

The Benedictine cloister is half sheltered in the rock; after having visited the rooms of the library one goes down to the cloister, where the daylight, falling from high above because of the rocks that dominate and enclose it, seems faded despite the full afternoon sun. Very humid mosses clothe the walls and water constantly trickles down. Everything seems to crumble with a white and green decay. Still lower, receiving its air and light only through a vent opening into the cloister, the much vaster crypt stretches out. An unreal light of limbo softly bathes the asymmetrical pillars; an infinite, profound stillness. The monk leading me lights with a little lamp the piles of skulls and bones; some of them are velvety white.

Then, between two rows of massive pillars, a row of six open sarcophagi, tight against each other and filled to the brim with bones.

Farther on, some rather good frescoes by a pupil of Giotto.

Left Taormina for Catania. Amazing countryside of blackish vegetable-mold and lava, where grow, in the scoria, common asphodels.

See Syracuse in the summer. Then the papyrus of the two banks of the Cyane join together, say our sailor guides, to form above your boat a filigreed vault. The flat boat bumps the shores, tears up the weeds in the shallow water, drags the roots along with a rustling sound. The very low sky pulls the clouds down to earth. The boat goes slowly back upstream.

The spring is surrounded by papyrus formerly planted by the Arabs; I imagine the approaches to the great African lakes as differing very little from this. This spring is at the bottom of a deep basin. Rather thick, the water seems strangely blue. Great azure fish are swimming in it; I should like to throw in a ring. . . . I think of the swimming-pools of Gafsa, those pools of warm water where huge blind fish, supposedly left by the great Tanit, brush against the swimmers and one can see blue snakes wriggling over the tiles on the bottom.